

Message Text

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14

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 SAM-01 SAB-01 OPR-02

A-01 OC-05 CCO-00 EB-07 SSM-03 SY-05 SCCT-01 DHA-02

ORM-02 /104 W

----- 074906

Z O 061208Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC FLASH 9405

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ATHENS IMMEDIATE

USINTO BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

USMISSION USUN NY

CIA WASHDC

DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER IMMEDIATE

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON UK

COMSIXTH FLT

CTF SIX ZERO

CTF SIX ONE

CTF SIX TWO

CTF SIX ZERO PT TWO

FOSIF ROTA SP

FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 2997

STUTTGART FOR ELG

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, PINS, PINT, LE

SUBJ: LEBANESE SITUATION AS OF 0900 APRIL 6: POLITICAL SCENE SHOWS
GLIMMER OF HOPE

1. FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE CEASEFIRE ANNOUNCED FIVE DAYS AGO, MOVEMENT IS DISCERNIBLE ON POLITICAL SCENE. PARLIAMENT SPEAKER KAMEL AL-ASSAD WILL HOLD PRESS CONFERENCE TODAY, AND GENERAL BELIEF IS HE WILL ANNOUNCE THAT AGREEMENT FINALLY REACHED TO HOLD PARLIAMENT SESSION IN VILLA NEAR NATIONAL MUSEUM. THIS IS LARGE PRIVATE MANSION ON BORDER OF CHRISTIAN-MOSLEM ZONES CLOSE TO GENERAL AHDAB'S HQS., WITH RESULT THAT AHDAB MAY BE ABLE PROVIDE AT LEAST SYMBOLIC PERIMETER SECURITY WITH CONTINGENT OF LEBANESE TROOPS IN HIS COMMAND. PALESTINIAN FORCES WILL PROBABLY BE STATIONED SEVERAL BLOCKS AWAY TOWARD WEST, WHILE KATAEB AND/OR NATIONAL LIBERALS WILL NOT BE FAR DISTANT TOWARD EAST. EXACT SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS AS YET UNDETERMINED BUT WILL PROBABLY BE ALONG THESE LINES.

2. SPEAKER TODAY ANNOUNCED DATE OF FIRST SESSION OF PARLIAMENT FOR AMENDING CONSTITUTION AS SATURDAY, APRIL 10. POLITICAL SETTLEMENT PROCESS WILL NECESSARILY EXTEND BEYOND TEN-DAY TRUCE EXPIRING APRIL 12. IF CONSTITUTION SUCCESSFULLY AMENDED BY THEM, HOPE IS THAT JUMBLATT WILL ACCEPT TRUCE RENEWAL. HE HAS INDICATED PRIVATELY HIS WILLINGNESS TO DO SO PROVIDED SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS ACHIEVED IN MEANTIME.

3. AGREEMENT ON PLACE AND TIME OF SESSION EVIDENTLY REACHED WITHOUT ANY TANGIBLE PROGRESS ON IDENTITY NEXT PRESIDENT. THIS IS AN ACHIEVEMENT MANY THOUGHT IMPOSSIBLE ONLY YESTERDAY. START OF "CAMPAIGN" OF SORTS IS EVIDENT, AS MICHEL KHOURY CALLED ON QULAYLAT YESTERDAY AMID WIDE PRESS COVERAGE AND ELIAS SARKIS DUE TO MAKE SWING IN JOUNIEH AREA TODAY. RAYMOND EDDE SCHEDULED A PRESS CONFERENCE YESTERDAY, BUT THEY CANCELLED IT ON ADVICE OF GHASSAN TUEINI AND SEVERAL DEPUTIEES. WORD IS THAT HE INTENDED ISSUE STATEMENT CRITICAL OF SYRIA IN HIS USUAL IRREPRESSIBLE FASHION, UNTIL HE WAS PERSUADED THIS IS NOT REALISTIC WAY TO WIN SUPPORT AND INFLUENCE VOTES.

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4. AMBASSADOR BROWN'S MISSION RECEIVING STEADY PRESS AND PUBLIC ATTENTION. COMMENTS CONTINUE TO BE GENERALLY FAVORABLE, WITH A WAIT-AND-SEE ATTITUDE NATURALLY EVIDENT WHILE AMBASSADOR'S CONTACTS ARE IN PRELIMINARY PHASE. NOT UNEXPECTEDLY, COMMUNIST PARTY NEWSPAPER "AN-NIDA" EDITORIALIZED AGAINST BROWN TODAY, ALLEGING CIA BACKGROUND IN HIS CAREER; LIBYAN-SUPPORTED DAILY "AS-SAFIR" TODAY DISTORTED ITS REPORTING ON HIS ACTIVITIES TO LEAVE UNFAVORABLE

IMPRESSION BUT REFRAINED FROM EDITORIAL COMMENT.

5. SECURITY SITUATION IS IMPROVING SLOWLY IN BEIRUT AND THROUGHOUT COUNTRY. LEBANESE MILITARY SOURCE TOLD ARMA THIS MORNING THAT ONLY SPORADIC EXCHANGES OF FIRE OCCURRED OVER ALL FRONTS DURING PAST 24 HOURS. ONE OF THESE, HOWEVER, LASTED SEVERAL HOURS IN CENTRAL BEIRUT LAST NIGHT, TESTIFYING TO FRAGILITY OF SITUATION IN WHICH ARMED MILITIAS REMAIN AT BARRICADES. SNIPERS STILL PROLIFERATE IN CAPITAL. METN LINES APPEAR STABILIZED, ALTHOUGH ONE REPORT INDICATES A SMALL ADVANCE BY LIFTISTS NEAR AINTOURA.

6. MAIN SECURITY PROBLEM IN BEIRUT IS LOOTING, ESPECIALLY OF BANKS. BANCO DI ROMA NEAR PARLIAMENT BUILDING WAS SYSTEMATICALLY PILLAGED IN BROAD DAYLIGHT YESTERDAY. PERPETRATORS TO THIS CRIME UNKNOWN, BUT IS HAD EARMARKS OF THOROUGHLY ORGANIZED JOB. THIS IS ELEVENTH BANK TO HAVE BEEN HIT BY LOOTERS IN RECENT MONTHS. BANKERS ASSOCIATION IS UP IN ARMS, DEMANDING ACTION, BUT BEING UNSURE WHERE TO TURN.

7. CONTINUED LACK OF FULL SECURITY SHOWING EFFECTS IN SUPPLY OF FOOD AND OTHER ESSENTIALS TO POPULACE. IN BEIRUT, BOTH SIDES OF CITY ARE HURTING, BUT REPORTS INDICATE THAT CHRISTIAN ZONE IS HARDER HIT THAN MOSLEM AREA. ZAHLE, CHRISTIAN STRONGHOLD IN BEKAA, IS NOW CUT OFF ON ALL SIDES AND IS EXPERIENCING SEVERE SHORTAGES OF FOOD AND GASOLINE.

BROWN

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